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Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
SS-15 ICA-11 ACDA-12 TRSE-00 /099 W
----------017953 220919Z /10
R 220801Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY RABAT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5857
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
AMEMBASSY PARIS
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EO 11652: NA
TAGS: PEPR PBOR MO SP
SUBJECT: VISIT OF SPANISH PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION

1. AN EIGHT-PERSON SPANISH PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION LED BY PARLIAMENTARY PRESIDENT ALVAREZ MIRANDA MADE A SUCCESSFUL FOUR-DAY VISIT TO MOROCCO JUNE 15-18. INVITED BY THE GOM, THE DELEGATION MET WITH KING HASSAN, FOREIGN MINISTER BOUCETTA AND THE LEADERS OF MOROCCO'S PARLIAMENT. PUBLIC STATEMENTS AND PRESS COVERAGE FOCUSED ON SHARED GOALS, INTERESTS, AND FOREIGN THREATS. AN EDITORIAL IN THE SEMI-OFFICIAL AL-MAGHRIB NOTED THAT THE BI-LATERAL DISAGREEMENTS OF THE FRANCO ERA ARE NOW PAST AND CALLED FOR THE TWO COUNTRIES "TO BUILD THEIR FUTURE JOINTLY."

2. ON JUNE 19, MOROCCAN PARLIAMENTARY PRESIDENT DEY OULD SIDI BABA PRIVATELY GAVE AMBASSADOR AN UPBEAT ACCOUNT OF THE VISIT AND REPORTED THAT HE WOULD LEAD A RETURN DELEGATION IN OCTOBER. HE ALSO SAID THAT THE TWO SPANISH SOCIALIST (PSOE) MEMBERS OF THE DELEGATION WERE IMPRESSED WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF OPPOSITION
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IN THE EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE BRANCHES, AND THE DEGREE OF PRESS CRITICISM OF THE GOVERNMENT AND THAT THIS WAS QUITE DIFFERENT FROM WHAT THEY HAD EXPECTED. DEY OULD SIDI BABA ADDED THAT ALGERIAN SUPPORT FOR THE CANARY ISLANDS' LIBERATION MOVEMENT, MPAIAC, HAD BEEN A MONUMENTAL ALGERIAN ERROR WHICH WAS MOVING THE PSOE AWAY FROM ITS PREVIOUS SUPPORT OF THE ALGERIAN POSITION ON THE WESTERN SAHARA.

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3. ONE LINGERING BILATERAL IRRITANT -- THE STATUS OF THE SPANISH ENCLAVES OF CEUTA AND MELILLA -- DID FLARE UP AT THE TIME OF THE VISIT, THOUGH THERE IS NO EVIDENCE THAT IT CREATED ANY PROBLEMS FOR THE VISIT ITSELF. ON JUNE 12, SPANISH FONMIN OREJA WAS QUOTED IN AFP AS STATING THAT CEUTA AND MELILLA WOULD BE INCLUDED AUTOMATICALLY IN NATO IF SPAIN DECIDED TO JOIN THAT ORGANIZATION. HE REPORTEDLY ARGUED THAT SPAIN'S POSSESSION OF THE TWO ENCLAVES HAD NEVER BEEN CONTESTED IN INTERNATIONAL FORUMS, UNLIKE BRITAIN'S OCCUPATION OF GIBRALTAR. THIS STATEMENT IN EFFECT WENT COUNTER TO PERIODIC MOROCCAN CLAIMS TO THE ENCLAVES AND STATEMENTS BY KING HASSAN, HIMSELF, TO THE EFFECT THAT WHEN GIBRALTAR REVERTS TO SPAIN CEUTA AND MELILLA SHOULD ALSO REVERT TO MOROCCO. WHILE MOST MOROCCAN PAPERS CHOSE NOT TO REPLAY THE REMARKS, ON JUNE 15 AL-MOUHARRIR THE DAILY PAPER OF THE SOCIALIST OPPOSITION (USFP), RESPONDED WITH A STINGING EDITORIAL DESCRIBING THE ENCLAVES AS "INTERGRAL PARTS OF MOROCCAN TERRITORY" WHICH "MUST BE RE-INTEGRATED INTO THE MOTHER COUNTRY LIKE ALL TERRITORIES WHICH WERE UNDER SPANISH DOMINATION." TWO DAYS LATER AL-MOUHARRIR REPORTED THAT SPAIN'S KING JUAN CARLOS HAD SENT A MESSAGE TO KING HASSAN IN MAY PROMISING TO RETURN THE TWO CITIES TO MOROCCO IN 1981. ON JUNE 19 THE SPANISH EMBASSY IN RABAT ISSUED A FORMAL DENIAL THAT ANY MESSAGE HAD BEEN SENT PROMISING THE RETURN OF THE ENCLAVES.

4. SPANISH EMBOFF HAS CONFIRMED PRESS REPORTS FROM MADRID THAT
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PRIME MINISTER SUAREZ WOULD BE MAKING "VERY BRIEF" VISIT HERE NEXT WEEK, BUT CAUTIONED THAT NO OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT MADE YET.

5. COMMENT: THE PRO-GOVERNMENT PRESS'S HANDLING OF THE OREJA STATEMENT DEMONSTRATES THAT THE GOM REMAINS DISPOSED TO LET THE CEUTA AND MELILLA ISSUE LIE DORMANT, AT LEAST UNTIL THE STATUS OF GIBRALTAR IS DECIDED.
ANDERSON

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